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AND P. M. NORRIS Serial No. : 09/785,188 Filed : 02/20/2001

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REMARKS

Claims 1-36 are pending, claims 26-36 having been added by way of the present Preliminary Amendment.

New claims 31-35 are supported by, e.g., FIG. 2 and the written description thereof. New claims 28 and 29 and amended claims 13-15 and 17 recite hydroxy metallates as supported by, e.g., page 7, col. 16.

Applicant asks that all claims be examined.

Date: 10/11/2001

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Version with markings to show changes made

In the Claims:

Claims 12, 13-15, 17-18, 22, and 24-25 have been amended as follows:

12. (Amended) A method comprising:

providing a sol solution having less than 29 mole % organic solvents to make said sol compatible with a [biological material] <u>cell;</u> and

immobilizing said [biological material] <u>cell</u> by mixing said [biological material] <u>cell</u> into said sol.

13. (Amended) A method comprising:

[hydrolyzing a sol-gel precursor in water to form] <u>forming</u> a sol containing <u>a hydroxy</u> <u>metallate and</u> an organic solvent;

mixing [said] a biological material with said sol; and

mixing a sufficient amount of a dispersant into said sol to cause macropores in a gel formed by said sol.

14. (Amended) A sol, comprising:

[a species formed by the hydrolysis of] P moles of a [sol-gel precursor] <u>hydroxy</u> <u>metallate;</u>

a sol solution including 71 mole % or more water and 29 mole % or less organic solvents; and

a biological material,

wherein said sol solution is compatible with said biological material.

15. (Amended) A sol, comprising:

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[a species formed by the hydrolysis of] P moles of a [sol-gel precursor] <u>hydroxy</u> metallate;

W moles of water;

a sufficient amount of a dispersant to cause macropores in a gel formed by said sol; and a biological material.

- 17. (Amended) The sol according to claim 15, wherein: said hydroxy metallate is formed by hydrolysis of a sol-gel precursor; and a [hydrolysis] ratio of W:P is greater than 25:1.
- 18. (Amended) The sol according to claim [15] <u>17</u>, wherein said sol-gel precursor comprises an alkoxy metallate.
- 22. (Amended) The sol according to claim 21, further comprising [a nutrient supply] <u>nutrients</u> configured to support said biological cell.
- 24. (Amended) The sol according to claim [15] 17, <u>further comprising an organic solvent</u> [wherein said organic solvents comprise] <u>comprising</u> an organic by-product arising from [a production] <u>the hydrolysis</u> of said sol-gel precursor.
- 25. (Amended) The sol according to claim 15, wherein a [hydrolysis] ratio of W:P is greater than 100:1.

New claims 26-36 have been added.